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Zoellick Praises WTO Progress on Doha Agenda

WASHINGTON - U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick expressed his appreciation for the new energy the WTO Trade Negotiations Committee gave this week to the global negotiations launched at Doha in November last year.

"The message from Geneva is encouraging. I am pleased that so many Members are joining us to press the agenda ahead. The Doha agenda, with its promise of liberalization and a stronger set of trading rules, is essential for future growth and development of the global economy," said Zoellick. "Agreement this week to a negotiating plan for tariff reductions in manufactured goods means that negotiations in all areas are now focused on substance."

"The United States has made far-reaching proposals in agriculture and services and we are keeping our pledge to work actively in the areas of intellectual property protection and access to medicines," said Zoellick, who reiterated that the United States will continue to play a central role in the negotiations. "We have led by example in strengthening technical assistance and capacity building programs - both at the WTO and bilaterally."

"The signal from Geneva is clear: our partners are ready to bargain hard but they are looking for U.S. leadership and direction. The road ahead will be challenging and difficult if we are to realize our goals by the deadline of January 1, 2005. As WTO Director General Mike Moore and incoming Director General Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi have said, passage of Trade Promotion Authority by the Congress will provide the certainty of our leadership and enable the United States to continue to shape the global economy of the future."

In discussing Congressional action on TPA at a news conference in Geneva on Thursday, Moore said "The world does need American leadership...If it weren't to happen, this would be enormously disappointing in terms of the round." And Dr. Supachai added that "During the time that we are waiting for these kinds of positive signals, I don't think we should relent our effort. We need to carry on as best we can with the mandated negotiations, realizing that one of these days the trade promotion authority will be achieved."

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